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Sandwich Islands

The Sandwich Islands are situated in the North Pacific Ocean between 18 deg. 50 min. & 22 deg. 20 min N latitude, & between 154 deg. 53 min. & 160 deg. 15 W. longitude from Greenwich. They are about 2800 miles distant from the coast of Mexico on the East - about 5000 from the Shores of China on the West & 2700 from the Society Islands on the South.

They are ten in number stretching in a flattened curve E. S. E. & W. N. W. as follows Hawaii, Maui, Morokini, Tahurawe, Ranai, Morokai, Oahu, Tauai, Nihau, & Taura.

These Islands were discovered in 1778 by Capt James Cook of the British navy; & from him in honor of Earl Sandwich then First Lord of the Admiralty, received the name by which they are now distinguished. The tragical death of this celebrated navigator at Hawaii in the succeeding year, caused their existance to be made known to the civilized world & deeply impressed the Event on the public mind.

No foreign ship visited the group again till 1786 when the ill-fated La Perouse touched at Maui, & about the same time two vessels, Engaged in the trade of the N W Coast procured refreshments at the Island of Oahu. Very soon several others succeeded them, & in 1792 & 1794 the expedition under the Command of Vancouver visited the group.

At the time of their discovery, the four principal Islands were governed by separate & independant Kings. but ten years preceding the visit of Vancouver, Tamehameha, originally a chief of inferior rank, a man of ambitious spirit & of great per-

both of body & mind - had by his talents & prowess secured to himself the sovereignty of his native Island & was then pushing his conquest to the Islands of Mauis & Oahu. He secured the favor of Vancouver who afforded him great service in building a small vessel & in several other respects, & the king of Oahu having died the succeeding year in battle - he soon after became supreme governor of the whole group -

This great political change, together with the known kindness of Tamehameha to foreigners, opened the way to a safe & increasing intercourse with the American & European nations. The excellent harbor of Honolulu in the Island of Oahu being discovered most of the ships traversing the N. Pacific resorted thither for undergoing repairs & for procuring water & other refreshments.

The sandal wood a valuable article in the Chinese market soon became the means of extensive commerce between the king & foreigners. And foreign manufactures &c were thus introduced a degree of civilization commenced -

Early in the present century the natives began to enter into the service of foreign vessels & several of them made their way to the United States. Among these was Henry Obookiah - whose name & character is now extensively known & whose wanderings were by a wise & merciful Providence overruled to the unspeakable benefit both of himself & of his whole nation.

He arrived in New York in 1809 - He soon began to thirst for knowledge - and was received by a pious & intelligent gentleman in New Haven as a private pupil - He made rapid advances in knowledge - became a sincere convert to Christianity - & with a heart burning with love to Xt & to his dear countrymen, he began to qualify himself to return & preach to them the gospel of peace.

A school was soon established at Cornwall Con. for the purpose of educating persons in his condition & of his character, called the "Foreign Mission School" - Here Obookiah & several of his countrymen were placed - but before completing his course of instruction he died - in Feb 1818. The event however seemed to arouse the American churches to feel, & act

missionaries the Rev Messrs Bishop, Richards, & Stewart. two licensed preachers Messrs Ely & Goodrich - Dr Blatchley a Physician all married men Mr L Chamberlain agent of secular affairs & a colored girl attached to the family of Mr Stewart. also three Sandwich Islanders from the school at Cornwall. This little company sailed from N Haven in Nov 1822.

It is an interesting fact that Hawaihaa the high priest from whom the missionaries had anticipated much opposition & mischief, advised the King to destroy the idols, renounce their former superstitions & demolish the temples. He received the missionaries with great kindness & assured them of his friendship & support.

Owing to the suggestions of unprincipled foreigners the natives were at first quite suspicious of the motives of the missionaries; and every movement that they did not immediately & fully understand tended to enkindle their suspicions. But by the blessing of God these suspicions gradually wore away in a great measure —

In Oct 1820 the missionaries were called to experience some very discouraging & unpleasant affairs among themselves. Dr Holman refused to listen to the counsel of his brethren & resolved to act independantly & for his own self-interest. He proceeded therefore to Oyo or 80 miles from the rest of the company - & instead of aiding only grieved & injured them. He was cut off from the mission [illegible] as soon as the Board heard of his conduct & could send him the result of their decisions —

Another painful occurrence was the defection & final apostacy of William Tennoce. he was affectionately & faithfully dealt with by the spiritual watchmen of this little flock, & much forbearance was exercised but he avowed his determination to continue the same course of intemperance & Sabbath-breaking that he had pursued - & was consequently cut off from the Church. He endeavored to injure the mission but his influence was so small, owing to his base conduct that he could effect but little.

The missionaries as early as 1820 or 1821 received a letter of congratulation from the governor of Kamschatka, expressing great satisfaction & delight in learning that the Gospel was brought to the Sandwich Islands & his readiness to maintain a friendly correspondence with a view to promote the interests of Christianity. They were also cheered by the kindness, respect & generous presents of the commander & officers of two Russian ships of discovery which touched at the Islands in April & Dec of 1821.

The most remarkable event in the history of this mission hitherto since its Establishment was the visit of the Rev Daniel Tyerman & George Bennet Esq. who had been sent as deputies of the London Miss. Soc. to the missions in the South Sea Islands. This Event was brought about by a series of occurrences which frustrated

previous plans & conspired in producing the most desirable results.

Their arrival was very seasonable, as slanders against mission had been circulated among the natives & every effort that envy & malignity could invent was made use of to disaffect the minds of the chiefs.

These gentlemen, of public character & acknowledged private worth, who were well acquainted with the state of affairs in the neighboring Islands confirmed almost irresistably the previous reports concerning the glorious triumphs of Christianity in those parts. The natives of those Islands who accompanied them, also corroberated the testimony already given. This concurrent & ample testimony gained the full confidence of the chiefs & of the people.

The visit of these men also refuted some other mischievous suggestions which the unfeeling & base foreigners had industriously circulated.

They had learned from personal observation & from familiar & brotherly intercourse with missionaries in the field the severe trials the arduous labors & great obstacles incident to a missionary life. They were therefore able & disposed to speak a word of exhortation & advice as well as consolation & encouragement to their brethren of this station.

They also addressed a letter containing valuable suggestions & statements to the American Board.

Mr Ellis a missionary of the Lon. Soc. who had labored at the Society Islands several years - had accompanied Messrs Tyerman & Bennet - with a design & expectation of commencing a mission at the Marquesas Islands. But a council of chiefs was held to invite him to remain at the Sandwich Islands, & the proposal was warmly seconded by the American missionaries.

Mr Ellis' acquaintance with the language (for it scarcely differs from that of the Society Islands) & his rich store of experimental knowledge as well as of interesting & important facts & the prospect of good from an Englishman's being associated with Americans in this mission - these & other considerations having been prayerfully & candidly weighed - seemed to indicate to Mr E. that it was his duty to accept of the proposal.

Having therefore accompanied these gentlemen back to the Society Islands & obtained his family - he returned & became a welcome & efficient fellow laborer among his American Brethren.

Mr Ellis was the first man who preached the joyful message of salvation in these Islands in regular discourses without an interpreter. Soon however Mr Bingham followed his example.

Mr Chamberlain not finding it practicable to carry on the business of agriculture, & being out of health & advised by his brethren of the mission concluded to return to America with his family as soon as an opportunity offered.

with the delightful interview with Mr Stewart their former fellow laborer, strengthened & animated the missionaries very much. The Board observe "the visit of the Vincennes taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case, seems to have been one of the happiest events that have taken place since the origin of the mission.

Mr Stewart describes the progress of knowledge, religion & civilization among the people as being much greater, during the four years of his absence, than he could have supposed from any accounts which have been published.

The missionaries have fixed upon Waialii in the northern part of Hawii as a place of resort for invalids. This place is about 11 miles from the sea, at an elevation of about 2,600 ft: the temperature is delightful & it is hoped that a residence there, free from care & labor, will supersede the necessity of a voyage to America, to those troubled with the liver complaint.

On the 28 Dec 1830 a third reinforcement sailed from New Bedford, consisting of the Rev Messrs Baldwin, Parker & Dibble missionaries & Mr Johnstone superintendant of secular affairs, & their wives. They arrived June 7th 1831 after a pleasant voyage, having received the kindest attention from Capt Parker & his crew. The next week after their arrival a general meeting of the missionaries was held at Honolulu & the new brethren were almost immediately united with their predecessors in the duties & responsibilities of the field of their future labors.

On the 26 Nov 1831 a fourth reinforcement sailed from New Bedford consisting of the Revd Messrs Emerson, Lyman, Spaulding, Alexander, Armstrong, Forbes, Hitchcock & Lyons, missionaries; Dr Chapin Physician & their wives & Mr Rogers Printer; 19 in all. This company had proceeded as far as the Island of Juan Fernandes last March & were reported "all well". It is expected that some of these together with some of the older missionaries will establish a mission at the Washington Islands.

As to the climate of the Sandwich Islands it is generally healthy & in some parts of remarkably pleasant & salubrious. The soil is various. In some places are found where it is equal to almost any in the world, & it is in general sufficiently productive to afford the industrious agriculturalist a rich reward.

The productions are taro, potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas, sugar cane, yams, Indian corn, water melons, musk melons, grapes, fig tamerand, pomegranites, oranges, coffee, bread fruit trees &c &c. Many of these articles have been introduced from other countries. Garden vegitables have been cultivated by the missionaries. The cotton plant may be easily cultivated there.

The native females manufacture cloth from the bark of a certain tree - it is not durable. The females also form mats which are used in great numbers for seats in the day time & for beds at night. These are made either of the rush or of the leaves of pa

The men are occupied in building houses & canoes, making fish nets, woden bowls & dishes &c. &c.

The houses are built principally of turf - with a few poles for a sort of frame. They have but one room in a house. Some of the houses built recently are of stone, & bedrooms are patitioned off in them. Timber suitable for building is very scarce in the Islands.

The government of the Islands was formerly despotic. Every one of the chiefs or people exercised absolute despotism over those within their power. The lives & property of their inferiors were subject their caprice.

The nobles of the land are easily distinguished by their external appearance. They are all large in their frame & often excessively corpulent; while the common people are scarce of the ordinary height of Europeans, & are of a thin rather than full habit. Their immense bulk is supposed to arise from the abundance & nutritious quality of their food & the great care taken of them from their earliest infancy. They are perfect Hercules in form & muscle & many of the common people as well as the chiefs have great beauty of person. The chiefs male or female are at once known not only by their size, but by their walk, general air & manner. They possess ease of action & unaffected dignity of deportment. Still however they bear the marks of untutored heathen.

The natives generally go almost naked. They seldom wear any clothes except the malo & kihei, that is a strip of cloth about the loins another thrown carelessly over the shoulders.

Their habits of indolence, lewdness, filthiness &c are so inveterate that grace scarcely ever entirely overcomes them in adults during life. They are extremely fond of (vocal) music, & dancing & card playing which last has long been introduced. They have four meals per day, one as soon as they rise in the morning; another at 10 or 11 o'clock A.M. a third about 4 P.M. & a fourth at 9 or 10 P.M.

I have scarcely time to glance at the wonderful improvements that have been made in these Islands in knowledge, morals & religion.

The language has been reduced to a form so precise that five vowels & seven consonants (or 12 letters in all) represent all the sounds yet discovered in the native tongue.

There are 900 schools taught by an equal number of native teachers with but little expense to the Board. There is a great thirst for knowledge - about 1/3 of the inhabitants of the Islands have been brought into schools & about one half of these have been taught to read. Many can write. Some have learnt the elementary principles of Arithmetic. Many books of the Old & New Testaments have been translated & printed & are widely circulated & attentively read. It is probable that the whole Bible will soon be translated & put into the hands of this anxious people. Most of the chief rulers are members of the visible church of Christ. Special laws have been

On the first Monday in Jan.y 1822 the press was put into operation & this gave a mighty impulse to the work of instruction. The scholars greatly increased & a deep interest was excited not only among those who attended school but among the natives generally.

Epistolary correspondence commenced among the natives in their own language in Feb 1822. And the King wrote a very interesting letter in the Dec following to the Board, dictated & penned wholly by himself —

Some attention to the external duties of religion, such as the observance of the Sabbath - family prayers &c now began to prevail among both the chiefs & the people. The common people declare that if the King & chiefs will obey the religion of Christ, they will follow their example.

In Aug.t 1822 the christian mode of solemnizing the marriage union was observed for the first time in these Islands.

The solemnities of christian burial were also introduced on the death of an infant son of Mr Bingham in January. These things seem to produce a happy effect upon the king & chiefs who attended —

After a pleasant & prosperous voyage interrupted by a few storms, the missionaries who embarked at New Haven in Nov. 1822, beheld the heights of Hawaii on the 24th April 1823 - & they landed at Honolulu on Sabbath the 27th. It is scarcely necessary to say they were joyfully welcomed to the scene of their future labors by their waiting brethren. Even the natives seemed transported with joy at the sight of new missionaries.

A new station was soon commenced by Mr.s Richards & Stewart, at Lahaina on Maui - and likewise two others on the Island of Hawaii were occupied - one at Kaiwua & the other at Waiakea.

In Nov 1823 the king embarked for London in an English whaler with the design of visiting the United States also. His principal motive probably was curiosity. He greatly desired the company of Mr Ellis & as Mrs E was in need of such a voyage for her health it was thought best that he should go - but Providence seemed to forbid it - & it was given up —

The king took with him besides his favorite queen Kamehamaru - six natives of the Islands, among whom was Governor Boki & his wife - & an Frenchman also attended him. The ship reached London in May - Early in July the queen was seized with the measles & died on the 10th. The king died about four days after with the same disease. He is said to have died with great composure, giving various directions to be observed after his death. He was about 28 years of age & the queen about 22 -

The kings Mother, Kaopuolani died in Sept 1823 previous to his Embarkation for England. She was very anxious to have him break off his habits of intemperance, & she faithfully & tenderly warned & enbreated him to attend to the Salvation of his Soul. But he seems not to have given evidence of any change. His mother however gave pleasing evidence of a good hope in Christ. She, agreeably to her request was Baptised or as she expressed it 'washed with water in the name of God" the same day on which she died. At her burial Christian rites were observed suitable to the solemn occasion, & in the tomb erected for her remains now rests also the ashes of Tamamarii, who died in May 1824 - giving good evidence of genuine faith in Christ.

Mr Ellis left the Islands in Sept 1824 for England by way of America. This eminently devoted missionary exerted a happy & extensive influence in behalf of missions by his counsels, conversation, & addresses during the 4 months that he remained in this country -

An insurrection was excited on the Island of Tauai by George son of the late King. He was displeased with his fathers will & determined to contend for what he claimed as his rightful inheritance. But he & his party shortly overpowered. & the government, reorganized - peace restored - & the mission resumed with cheering prospects of success. George had become intemperate, indolent & miserably degraded.

Near the close of the year 1824 the supplies of provision & other necessary articles had become exhausted. & there appeared to be no means of procuring them, but Thomas Hopu generously volunteered to travel over the land & carry on his back some light articles which he could barter for food.

About 50 of the natives having learnt to read & write now began to instruct their more ignorant countrymen. Several of the ancient priests, among whom was an uncle of Obookiah - were warm advocates for the new system.

A weekly prayer meeting of native females was commenced at their own request in Jan^y. 1825. & in Feb one for men was also begun. These were attended by some of the most influential of the chiefs - & the results were salutary & in some instances savingly beneficial -

During the year 1825 many trials as well as many cheering events befell the missionaries. Their efforts to discourage & prevent the practice of female visiting ships for the purpose of prostitution, had induced the chiefs to forbid it. This enraged the Captains & Seamen so much that several attempts were made to injure the missionaries & to destroy their lives. But the wrath of man was make to praise God. For these persecutions aroused the missionaries to greater prayer & watchfulness & the Lord soon revived his good work.

and to pray for his perishing & degraded countrymen. And in the fall of 1819 a company of missionaries embarked for these Islands from Boston under the patronage of the A. B. C. F. M.

The band consisted of the Rev Messrs Bingham & Thurston ordained ministers; Messrs Ruggles & Whiting catechists & teachers; Dr Holman a Physician, Mr Loomis a printer & Mr Chamberlain an agriculturalist, all married men. And four of the Sandwich Islanders

The cruelty of the natives to Capt Cook & to some more recent visiters of the Islands, had led the public to believe them more barbarous than those of other Islands in the Pacific.

The universal testimony of voyagers who were consulted relative to the proposed mission, was that the attempt to christianize or civilize the natives would be vain & extremely hazardous.

It was with just reason therefore that the friends of this mission & especially the superintendants of it, waited with deep solicitude to learn of the arrival of this little band & of their reception by the natives. Seventeen months elapsed before the desired news came. But tho' the suspense had been long, it was broken by sounds of gladness. The missionaries had not only arrived safely, but the first word of intelligence which reached their vessel was the astonishing & to them overwhelming Exclamation - "The Gods of Hawaii are no mon! Tamehameha is dead - Riho Riho is king. The Tabu is abolished & the temples & idols are destroyed."

Riho Riho the son of the late king had ascended the throne & had commenced his reign in a manner without a precedent in the History of the world. A pagan king unbidden & uninstructed, had in a day cast off all the gods of his people, & by a single stroke of boldness, overthrown a superstition which had held this degraded race for ages in the bondage of fear.

Having privately consulted the high priest & principal chiefs & obtained their cooperation - he made a great entertainment in Nov 1819 to which he invited all the leaders, mercantile agents, & residents then at the Islands, together with the whole company of chiefs. Two long tables were spread one for males & the other for females according to the Tabu restrictions - around which a multitude of the common people assembled

after the company were seated & served the king much agitated took a dish of the food denied to females in his hands & marched round the men's table as if to see that they were well served. Hastily he turned to that of the females & sitting down between two of his queens, began to eat with them from the dish which he had brought. At this the whole astonished multitude burst into the exclamation ("ai noa! ai noa"! (i.e. food common or meral in distinction from ai tabu food sacred).

The high priest himself rushed to fire an adjoining temple & messengers were dispatched in all directions to perpetrate a similar conflagration. Very soon every heathen temple in the Islands was reduced to ashes & the idols shared a similar fate - a few only being saved as mere objects of curiosity.

It was sufficient to satisfy the people to know that it was the pleasure of the king thus to cast off the tabu & abolish idolatry. One young chief however attempted to excite a rebellion - but he only brought ruin on himself & those of his party.

The king was probably convinced of the falsity of idolatry by observing the indifference or contempt manifested by foreigners for the gods & sacrifices of his nation, & was led by this & by the report that the Society Islands had destroyed their idols & by his strong attachment for his queens, who were very much restricted by the tabu, to this bold & important determination. But be the immediate cause what it may the Christian recognizes with joy & gratitude the hand of his heavenly Father in thus preparing the way for the introduction of the precious Gospel of his Son.

The little band of missionaries had expected a long & arduous struggle with this demon of idolatry & superstition - but the Lord who only doeth wonderous works looked upon these abominations & they sank at his presence & tumbled into ruins. And he commanded his little chosen band to march up "every man straight before him" & in the name of the God of Israel to "set up his banner". They found the natives not only ready to welcome them but really waiting for the divine law, tho' entirely ignorant of the way of salvation thro' Christ.

They were early & happily established on the Islands of Hawaii, Oahu, & Tauai, & so flattering were their prospects of usefulness, that the first communications from them to the Board were accompanied with strong & earnest requests for more missionaries. This application was again & again repeated till in 1822 the Board sent out a reinforcement consisting of three ordained